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HISTORIC LANDMARKS OF PHILADELPHIA





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HISTORIC LANDMARKS OF PHILADELPHIA



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WILLIAM PENN, should he sail up the Delaware at this date, more than two hundred years after planning and ordering the laying out of our "City of Brotherly Love," would hardly deem it "a green country town which will never be burnt and always be wholesome." Noisome odors assail the nostrils of those who come by water, and there is little in the appearance of monster warehouses and tall spires to lead one to think that hidden away between row upon row of busy hives of industry there are green spots, cool and restful, which were laid out under the supervision of Penn himself, and have never been encroached upon by the ever increasing volume of commerce which has developed in Philadelphia.

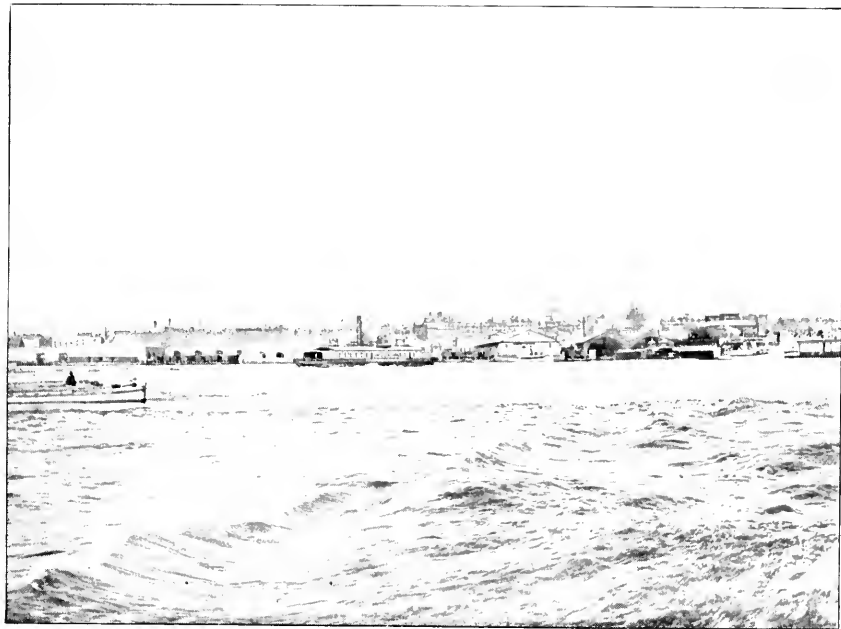
Buildings which the early settlers built and occupied still stand, monuments of industry, fidelity and far-sightedness. Some of our staunchest business houses were founded, and are still managed by descendants of these sturdy founders of a new province, and one can hardly look upon the historic landmarks of Philadelphia without feeling a sense of gratitude to the early fathers, who built so well, the foundations of this great city.

If the thought comes to any that the plan of William Penn, that Philadelphia should be "a green country town," has miscarried, let such an one turn in almost any direction and ride half an hour on steam or trolley car, and broad and beautiful green fields and imposing country residences will greet and rejoice their sight. No other city can boast of fairer homes nor better parks.

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PENN TREATY PARK.

WHETHER the story of a treaty of good feeling having been signed between William Penn and the Indians, has a foundation in fact or not, historians are slow to decide ; but the reputed site was marked for many years by a huge elm tree, and after the destruction of the tree the Penn Society erected on the spot the first public monument to be set up in Philadelphia. This was in 1827, and for many years thereafter no care was taken of the surrounding ground ; but within a few years the City has laid out and ornamented a small park, at the eastern limit of which a pavillion at the waters' edge makes a charming breathing place for the tired mothers and children who live in the vicinity. It is interesting to know that the small elms were given by the Cooper Estate of Camden, and are grown from an elm tree standing in Cooper Park, which is a scion of the "Treaty Elm."

The park is at the corner of Beach Street and Columbia Avenue, and can be reached by the Gunner's Run trolley cars east on Girard Avenue, getting off at Columbia Avenue and walking two squares.



THE LETITIA HOUSE.

WILLIAM PENN'S first residence in Philadelphia was a modest building which stood as near as could be in the centre of his plot, which lay between Front and Second Streets on High (now Market) Street and extended half way through to Chestnut Street.

It seems probable that this house was finished in 1682-3, and was occupied about that time by Penn, and when later he had built a more pretentious home at Pennsbury, he still made this small house his home whenever he remained in the city over night, or for any time. It was used as a counsel chamber and was really the first State House of the province. Grave and weighty men of affairs of the new province came and went over its threshold and some of the most momentous questions of the day were decided within its humble four walls.

It was finally given to Penn's daughter Letitia, who never lived in it ; and for nearly two hundred years the old house was put to many uses, sometimes not quite in keeping with the dignity of its first owner ; but finally the City gathered it out of its crowded corner in Letitia Street, and removed it to a safe and final site in Fairmount Park west of the Girard Avenue bridge.

It can be reached via Girard Avenue cars, and is open to the public.



LOGAN SQUARE.

WHEN Penn laid out his City, which it is said was divided and planned like Babylon of old, he made provision for five parks or squares, one in the center and one on each of the four corners. The one in the center has been named for the founder, that on the south-east corner for Washington, the one on the south-west for David Rittenhouse, the inventor and astronomer, that on the north-west for James Logan, Penn's Secretary, and the one on the north-east for Benjamin Franklin.

All of these squares have been the scenes of historic events—perhaps none more so than Logan Square, which is between Race and Vine Streets at Eighteenth. For many years the plot was used for a burying ground and for all public executions, the last of which was in 1823. In 1864 the Sanitary Fair was held here. Since that time the Square has been steadily improved until at this date it is a place fair to look upon and is surrounded by handsome residences and imposing institutions.

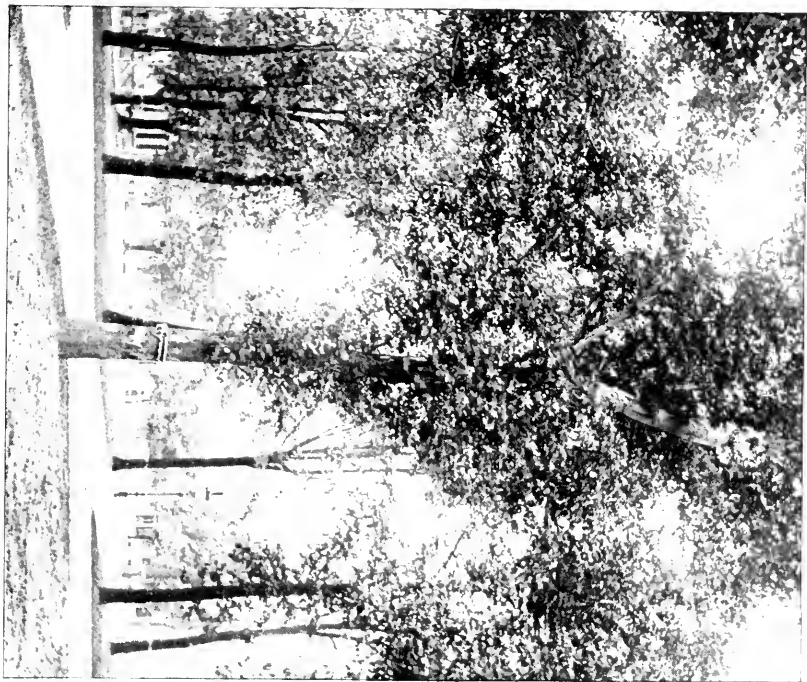
Penn Square is occupied by the City Buildings at Broad and Market Streets.

Washington Square is at Walnut and 6th Streets.

Rittenhouse Square is at Walnut and 18th Streets.

Logan Square is at Race, Vine and 18th Streets.

Franklin Square is at Race, Vine and 6th Streets.

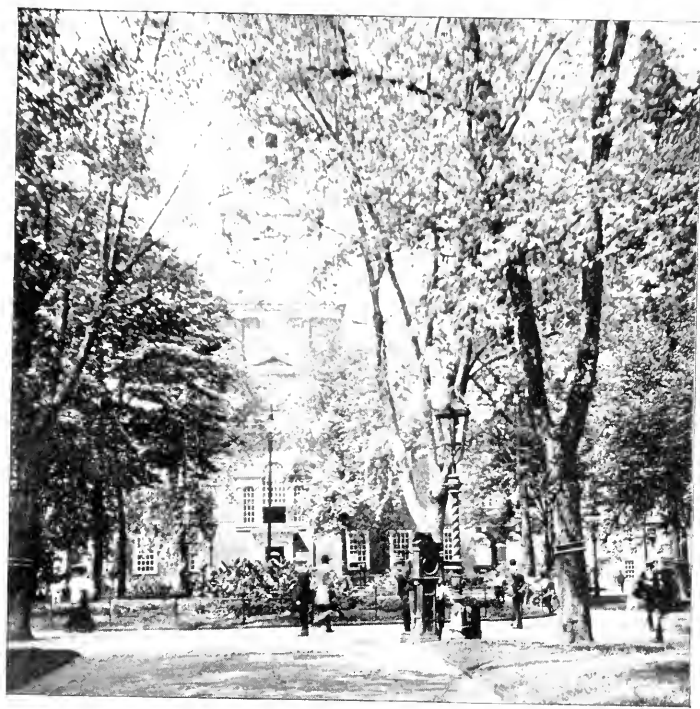


INDEPENDENCE HALL.

A VOLUME could be written about this most notable of Philadelphia's buildings. By a visit to its halls and rooms can one best realize the stirring events that have taken place within its walls. Historical data, with relics and paintings fill its spaces now and no true American ought to be in Philadelphia and not spend some hours wandering about among its treasures.

It was first occupied in 1735.

Can be reached by Chestnut Street cars.



LIBERTY BELL.

CAN any true American hear without a quickening of the heart-throbs the words : " Liberty Bell ? "

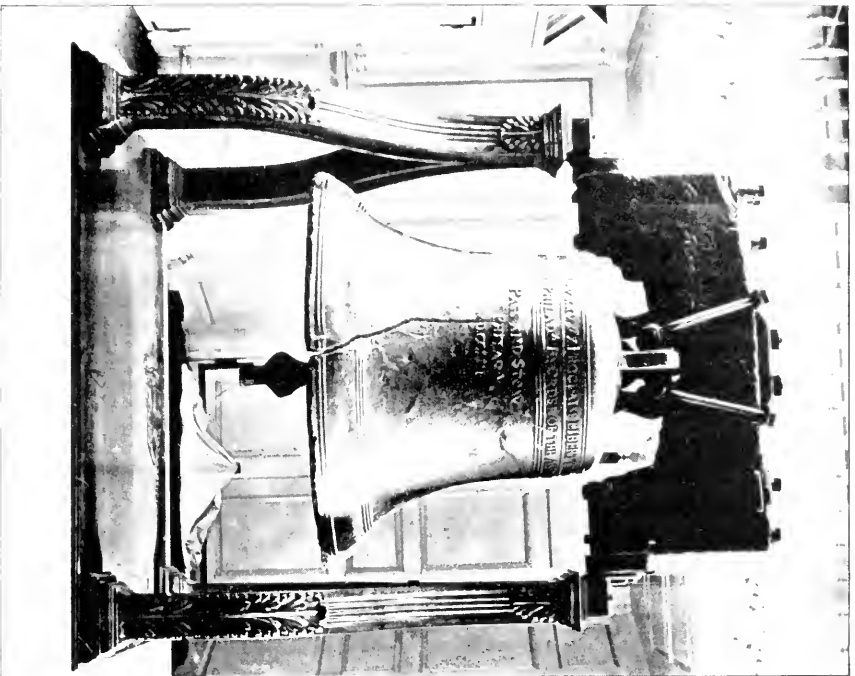
This interesting relic of the " first days " is most sacredly guarded within the hall where American Independence was born.

The tower was ordered to be added to the State House for a bell by the Assembly in February, 1750, and the bell received in 1752 from England where it had been cast at a cost of £198.

Upon trial it was cracked, and was recast twice, by Pass & Stow of Philadelphia, and finally hung in the steeple in June, 1753. Inscribed upon the bell is an extract from Leviticus, xxv, 10 : " Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof."

Its voice was heard upon all great occasions, the crowning one of all being when the Declaration of Independence was read from the observatory in the State House yard (Independence Square) which had been erected by the Philosophical Society in 1769 to observe the transit of Venus. We can easily fancy that its notes on that memorable 8th of July, 1776, were jubilant and brave. Used as a fire bell, and clock bell and an instrument loud and clear to voice the sentiments of a coming Nation, until its every note was dear to the inhabitants of Philadelphia, steps were taken to preserve and guard it when the British invaded the city in 1777,—together with the bells of Christ and St. Peter's Church taken to Bethlehem, and only returned when all danger was over. As a tower bell it was replaced in 1828 ; but was still rung on very great occasions : in rejoicing when the news arrived of the passage by British Parliament of the Act emancipating the Catholics ; in gratitude and thanksgiving upon the centennial anniversary of the birth of Washington ; cracked while being tolled in the early morning in respect for Chief-Justice Marshall, whose body was being borne through the streets *en route* to Richmond, Va. ; its sound was thereafter only a doleful echo of its former sweet tones, and it again cracked and became forever mute on the 22nd of February, 1843.

It has been taken to several celebrations in different parts of the country,—to the World's Fair at Chicago, in 1892 ; but it is questionable whether it will again make a triumphal pilgrimage : for it is distinctively a Philadelphia relic and is not complete outside the historic surroundings which are to be found in the City of its creation. It now hangs on its beam in a case in Independence Hall, at Chestnut, Fifth, and Sixth Streets.

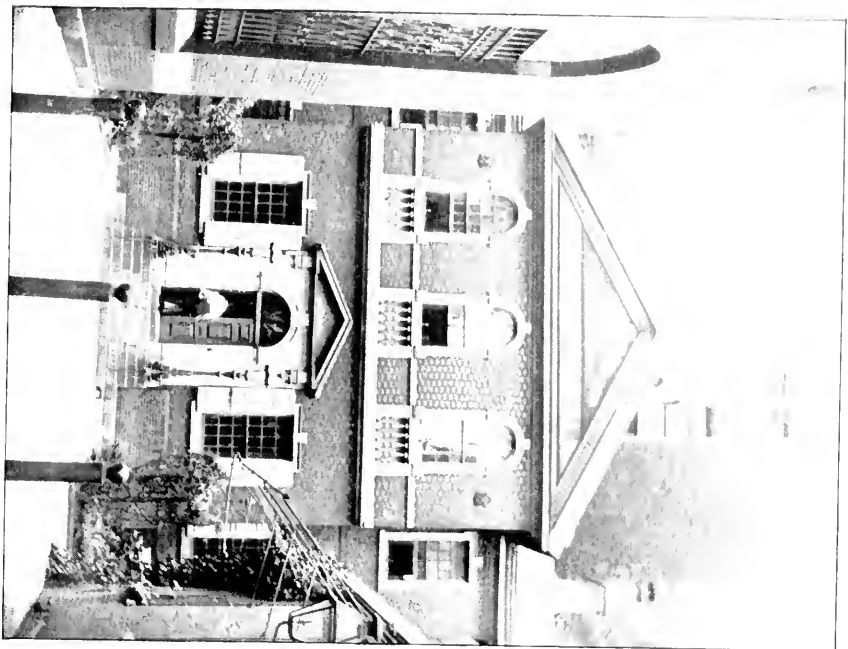


CARPENTERS' HALL.

THE Company of Carpenters, who built Carpenter's Hall, was instituted in 1724, their building was occupied first in 1771, and they gave it to the use of the Continental Congress in 1792, since which time, until a very few years ago, it has been put to many uses.

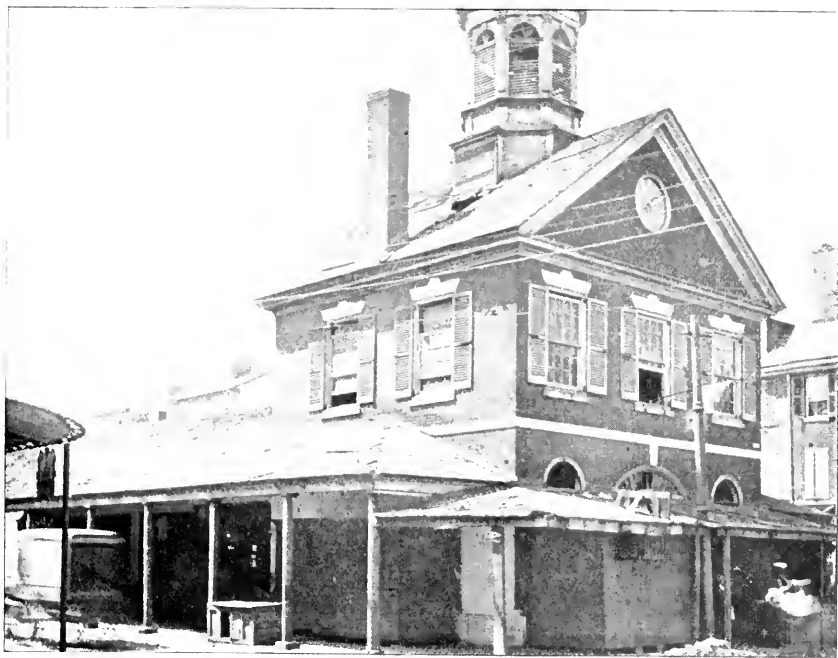
Provincial Conventions were held here ; British troops filled it with the sick and dying. The First Bank of the United States, The Bank of Pennsylvania, The Second Bank of the United States, and the Custom House, made its walls ring with money changing ; The Musical Fund, Apprentices' Library, Franklin Institute, the branch of Friends who, under the leadership of Elias Hicks, repudiated the doctrines of the main body of Friends, occupied the Hall as a meeting house in 1827. Later an auction house was found here, and still later, a second-hand store ; until, awakening to their privilege the Company rescued their building and restored it to nearly its old time appearance and now hold it as relic of the stormy past.

It is situated at 320 Chestnut Street, back from the street, a narrow entrance leading between two lofty bank buildings into the quiet and the long ago.



THE OLD MARKET HOUSE.

THE last of the Old Market Houses which once stretched their busy length along High Street (now Market), and, as the City grew and spread, along Callowhill, Spring Garden and Girard Avenue, will soon decay and be removed from Second and Pine Streets, and save for the showing how our forebears were served with food, it will be good riddance : for they were unsightly and odorous.



STENTON.

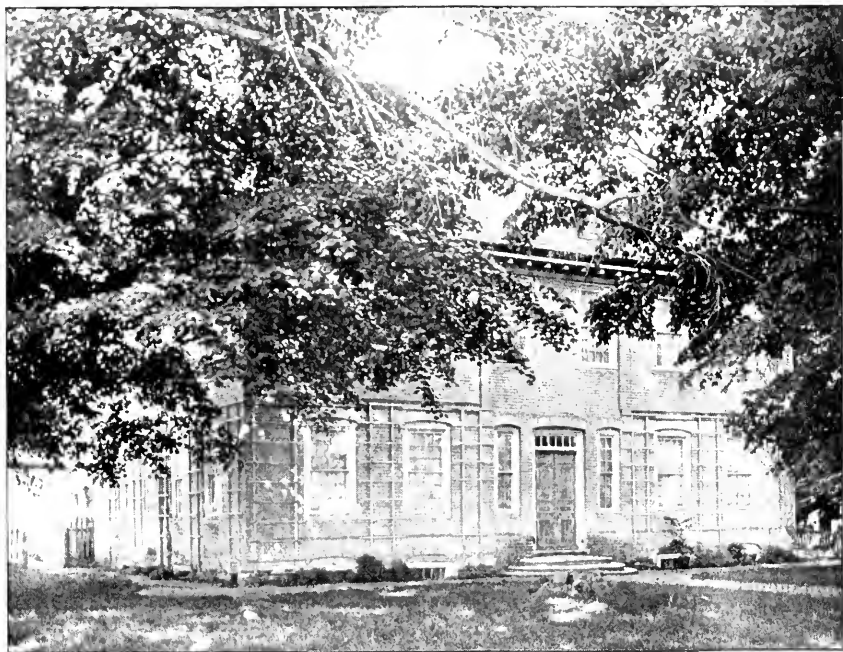
THE home of the beloved Secretary to William Penn, James Logan's "Stenton!" Here befeathered Indian warrior and dainty lady in "white satin petticoats worked in flowers, pearl satin gowns, or peach colored satin cloaks," were equally welcomed by the dignified master and his true help-mate and wife.

Still standing, though in a state of decay that makes one heart-sad.

To reach the house, take Germantown cars on 8th Street and get off at 18th and walk north to Courtland Street. Stenton is the last house on the right before reaching the railroad.

Originally the estate reached from Germantown Avenue to York Road and from Wingohocking to Nicetown Lane.

The part which has recently come into possession of the City includes eight acres near the Family Burying Ground.



THE SOLITUDE.

WILLIAM PENN'S grandson, John Penn, came over in 1783 to look after his interests in his grandfather's holdings, and in an enthusiastic mood bought fifteen acres on the west side of the Schuylkill, and built thereon the house which he named, after the estate of the Duke of Wurtemberg's, "The Solitude."

John Penn's stay was of short duration. He left America forever in 1789. The Solitude was probably occupied a short time by Governor Richard Penn. Granville John Penn was the last of the Penn family to make use of the property (in 1851), and it is now owned by the City and is enclosed in that part of the Park system called the Zoological Gardens.

Can be reached by the Girard Avenue cars.



THE FLAG HOUSE.

ON Arch Street near Third, is the old house in which Betsy Ross made the first flag for Washington and a committee, who probably employed her as she was at the time carrying on the upholstery business left by her husband who had died in the army.

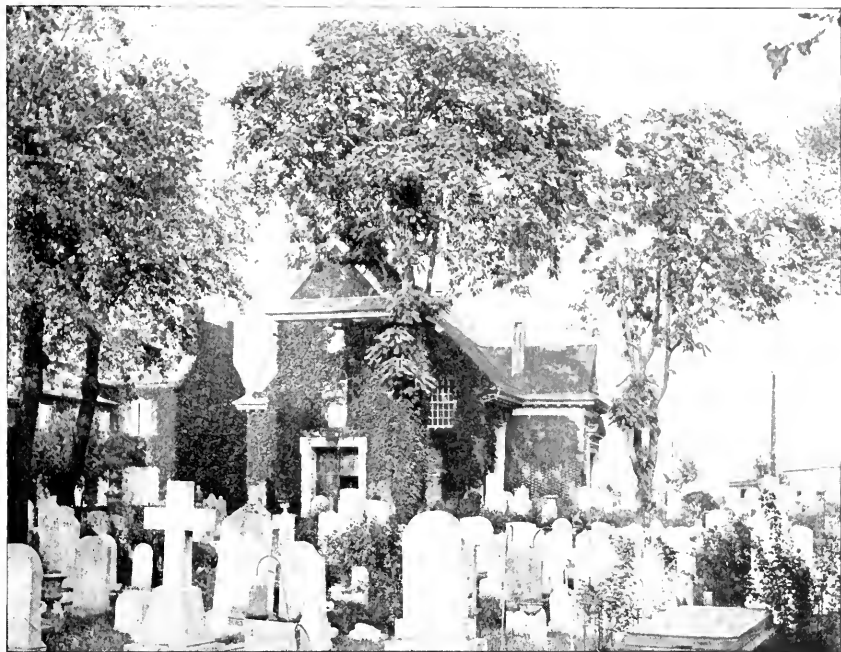
An effort is being made to preserve the quaint old building, which is well worth a visit.



GLORIA DEI.

GLORIA DEI or Old Swedes' Church is situated between Front and Swanson below Christian Street. Services began to be held in an old block house by the Swedes in 1677, and in 1770 the present building was completed and occupied and was thought to be a very fine edifice ; was visited by Friends and Church People. The Old Church is still used as a place of worship by the Swedes, and in the burying ground surrounding it, many noted persons have been buried, perhaps the most widely known in his day being Alexander Wilson, the ornithologist, who wished to be buried in Old Swedes' church-yard, because " the birds would come and sing over his grave."

Take the Second Street cars to Christian Street.



SAINT PETER'S.

CHRIST CHURCH, on Second Street above Market, is the oldest Episcopal Church in Philadelphia ; but St. Peter's is but a few years more recent, Christ Church having been built in 1727-9 and St. Peter's in 1758.

Both have very interesting histories and have numbered among their members and rectors some of the very noblest of citizens.

Washington worshipped in both Churches, and in both, a pew may be seen that was occupied by him and his family.

St. Peter's is at Third and Pine Streets.

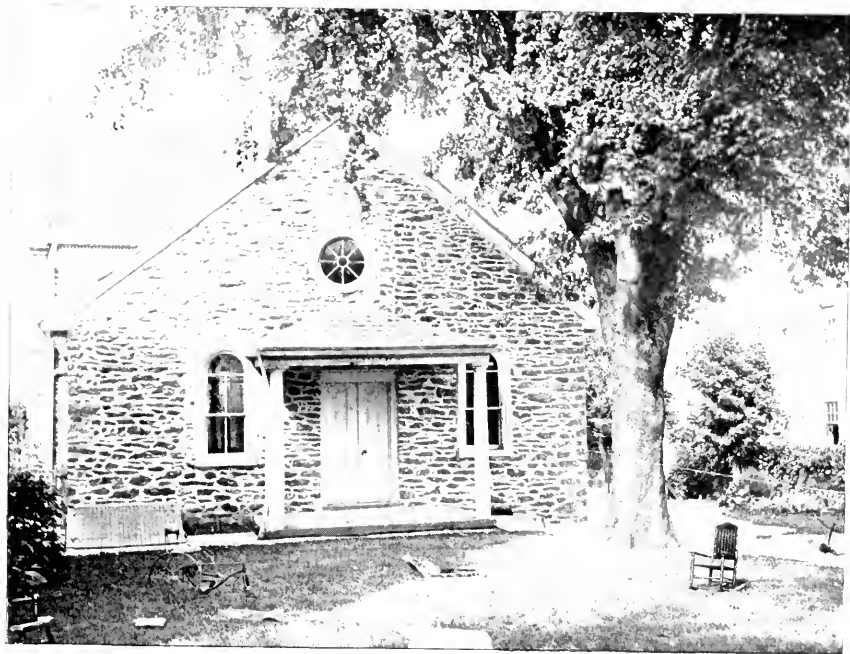
Christ Church Burying Ground where Benjamin Franklin is buried, is at Fifth and Arch Streets.



OLD TUNKER CHURCH.

THE sect known variously as Tunkers, Dinkers, Dunkards, Tumblers, Dumplers, Brethren and German Baptists, have now only two Churches in Philadelphia, the older one being on Germantown Avenue above Sharpnack Street, a quaint old building erected in 1770.

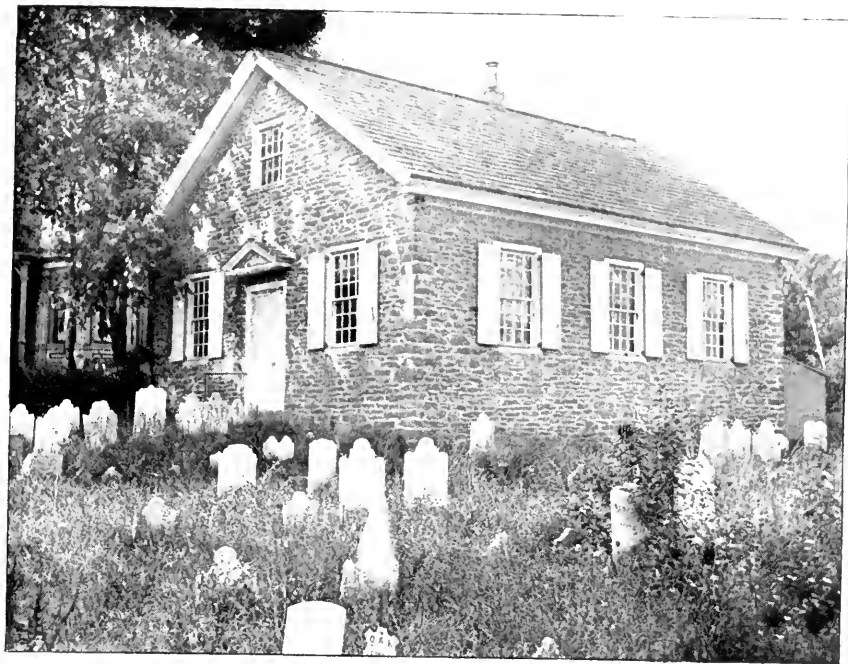
Germantown Avenue cars on Eighth Street run past the place.



THE MENNONITE CHURCH.

IN 1863, William Penn invited the Mennonites, who were being severely persecuted in Germany, to become residents of the new province, and they came and settled in Germantown, many of them becoming large holders of property thereabout.

Their oldest Church now stands on Germantown Avenue above Herman Street, and was built in 1770, as the date on the front, states. Behind the wall, which at that time enclosed the graveyard here, lay the man who shot General Agnew, the British officer, as he was riding by during the Battle of Germantown.



ARCH STREET MEETING HOUSE.

TO give a history of Friends in Philadelphia, would be to give a complete history of the City from its earliest inception. In every year and every movement that is marked by an importance, Friends have had their part and left the impress of their character upon every aspect of the City's growth.

The Meeting House at Fourth and Arch Streets is only one of the tree-encircled buildings, set back from the noise of traffic, which may be seen in different parts of the City and in fact the whole of Eastern Pennsylvania and in New Jersey.

Here the "Yearly Meetings" are held, and at that season one can get a truer sense of the dignity and calmness of the body of Friends than at perhaps any other time.

The ground about this Meeting House was used for many years as a burial place; but in accordance with one of the rules of their Meeting, no stones mark the resting places of many whose lives have meant so much to our City.



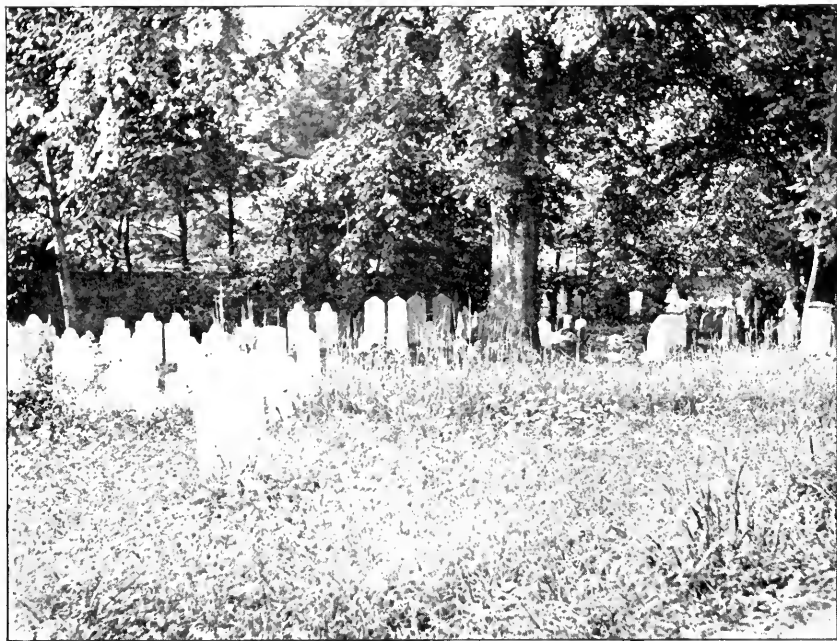
CONCORD OR OLD AX BURYING GROUND.

THIS burial place was used first in the early part of the last century to bury such as did not belong to any religious society. John Frederick Ax was in charge of it from 1724 until in 1758, when he became too feeble from age to perform his duties, and from him, it derived the name "Old Ax Burying Ground."

It is situated on Germantown Avenue above Washington Lane.

It was also called the "Upper Burying Ground," and now the "Concord Burying Ground," from the Concord School House which was built and still stands upon a part of the cemetery lot.

George Lippard the novelist, and a large number of his family, are buried here.



CLIVEDEN.

THE history of the "Chew Mansion" is known to almost every man, woman and child in America ; but to look at the bullet scarred walls of the still handsome and well kept residence makes great throbs come in one's throat and if never before the history of the war has seemed real it will at sight of the unmistakable evidences to be seen there. Decapitated statuary stands all about, and I confess I had an uncanny feeling that the ghostly bayonets on British guns were pointed at me from the grated cellar windows.

Cliveden, as the mansion is called, stands far back amidst grand old trees on Germantown Avenue, at the corner of Johnson Street.



THE JOHNSON HOUSE.

THIS house stands flush with the street at Germantown Avenue and Washington Lane. There is an air of magnificent history about the whole place that makes one feel instinctively that stirring times have been seen by the old house and shaded grounds. It was erected in 1768 by John Johnson for his son John, and is still occupied by members of the Johnson family.

Here too, may still be seen the marks of angry bullets.



VERNON.

THE John Wistar property in Vernon Park is now occupied as a branch of the Philadelphia Free Library, and may be visited by any one interested. It is situated on Germantown Avenue just above Cheltenham Avenue.



MERMAID INN.

TWO old buildings that have weathered the storms of more than a century are the Mermaid Inn and the log house near to it, in Mount Airy, on Germantown Avenue, corner of Mermaid Lane.

One might easily dream while looking at these quaint buildings, they were living back in another time for there seems nothing in the vicinity to mar the romantic age of the old places.



THE STATE IN SCHUYLKILL.

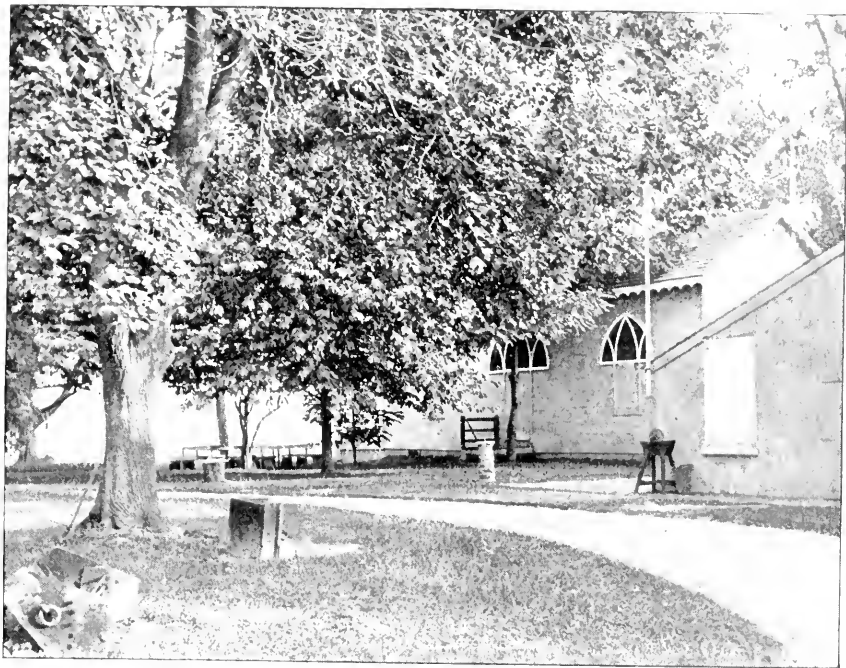
THAT the Forefathers were not always grave and serious is evidenced by this relic of their levity, which, after many precarious movings is now, it would seem, permanently settled at Eddington on the Delaware.

In 1732, a party of our ancestors organized a fishing club, calling themselves "The Colony in Schuylkill" and going, when they pleased, in company or singly to fish in the prolific waters of the Schuylkill. This is the oldest social club in existence.

In 1737 they changed the name to "The State in Schuylkill" and erected a "Castle" on land belonging to William Warner just above the spot where the Girard Avenue Bridge rests on the western shore of the Schuylkill. The citizens of the State in Schuylkill delivered to William Warner on the first day of every June three fresh fish as rent for the land upon which their Castle stood. This annual payment of such "enormous" rent was attended with great ceremony and state.

When the dam was built at Fairmount, the waters disturbed the safety of the modest Castle and it was decided to remove it to Rambo's Rock, on the east bank of the Schuylkill, and there it remained until a year or two ago, when it was again taken apart and moved to Eddington, where it is erected and has the same appearance it had nearly two hundred years ago.

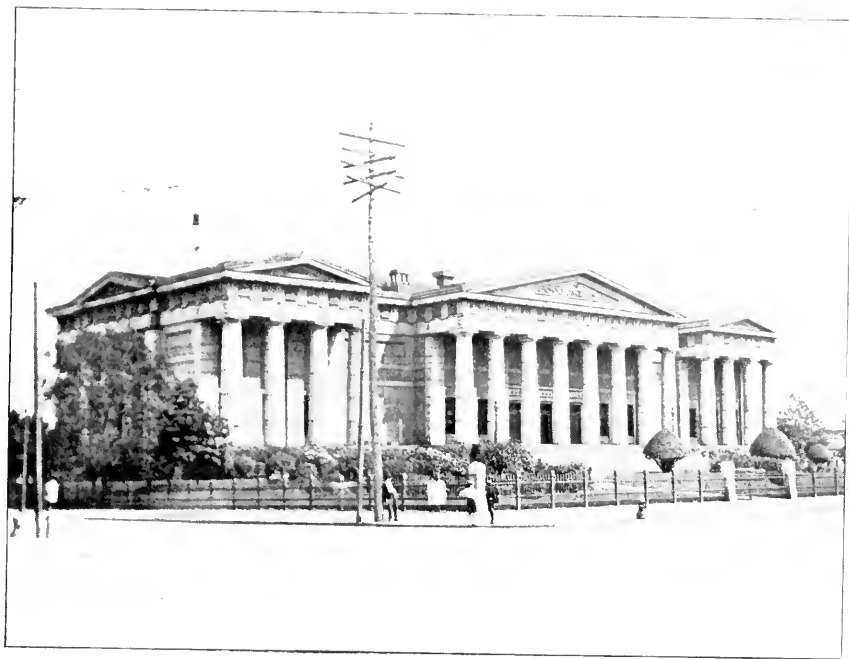
It may be reached by the Bristol Boats or by Pennsylvania trains to Eddington Station, but from here there is a long walk to be taken.



RIDGEWAY LIBRARY.

PHILADELPHIA'S finest and most richly stocked library is a monument of the munificent Doctor Rush, erected as a memorial to his wife, Madam Rush, nee Ridgeway. Here is deposited the library owned and willed to the City by James Logan, and many rare and priceless literary treasures are here.

It stands on the corner of Broad and Christian Streets running through to Carpenter and Thirteenth.



JOHN BARTRAM'S HOUSE.

BARTRAM'S Botanical Gardens are situated on the Schuylkill River, below Gray's Ferry Road. They may be reached via. the Darby cars from Walnut Street, getting off at Fifty-fourth and Woodland Avenue, and walking about a quarter of a mile east.

The Garden is now the property of the City and is kept open as a park. The old house that Bartram built, it is said, with no outside assistance, still stands as he left it, and is a poem of antiquity and quiet, rural, home life.

Carved on a block of stone which is set over the window of the room used by Bartram as a study are these words :—

“ 'Tis God alone, Almighty Lord,
The Holy One by me adored.

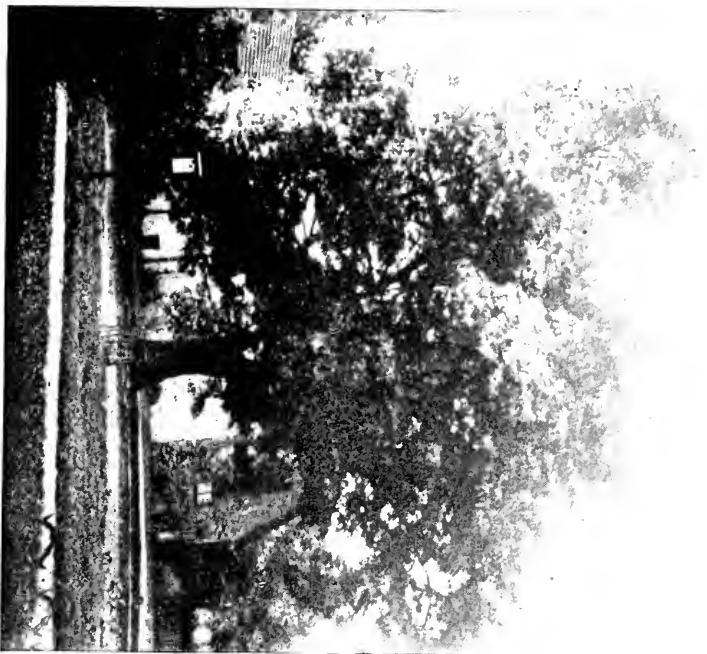
John Bartram, 1770.”

One of the most interesting trees in the old garden is a magnificent specimen of the “ rarest tree in America,” (Dr. Hotchkiss calls it,) the *Virgilia Lutea*. It grows sparingly in Kentucky, and is fancifully thought by some to be the “ shittim wood” mentioned in the Scriptures. Its wood is very hard and of a bright yellow color, and most interesting, it bears, in the spring, large clusters of white flowers, closely resembling the wisteria.



AS must be seen, this little book is only intended to show by illustration and brief description how rich in historical treasures our beloved City of Philadelphia is, and the writer would most earnestly urge all who have been interested in this subject to read Westcott's "Historic Mansions," Scharf and Westcott's "History of Philadelphia" and Doctor Hotchkiss's "Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill," for fuller and more complete information.

The volumes deposited in the library of the Historical Society at Thirteenth and Locust Street, would well repay the lengthy examination of every one who has time and inclination for such study, and it is to be hoped that all will become more interested from looking over this pamphlet.



Virgilia lutea—Bartram's Gardens.

The Leeds Press
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